

F. Ravenna Urban Village

Current Conditions

The easternmost section of the University Community Urban Village, **Ravenna** Urban Village, is named for the Town of Ravenna, which was incorporated in 1887 when the University of **Washington** was still located downtown. A photo from that era shows a thriving commercial area along 24th Avenue NE, including a grist mill powered by **Ravenna** Creek flow. Privately-owned Ravenna Park was already a major tourist attraction. The Ravenna area today extends far beyond the urban village boundaries.

The shape of this urban village, which includes that former town, is related to its geography: the steep **Ravenna** Springs hillside on the west and the former shoreline of Union Bay once paralleled by the Seattle Lakeshore & Eastern Railroad. The railroad has become the **Burke-Gilman** Trail which curves around the current commercial district. **Ravenna** Park is adjacent to the urban village on its NW edge. Clockwise, the boundaries are, starting from the north, NE 55th Street east to 25th NE, south to the **Burke-Gilman**, east to Union Bay Place NE curving south to NE 45th Street, west up the viaduct to 21st Avenue NE and then north to NE 55th again.

Ravenna Urban Village comprises 122 acres and is today a mixture of residential and commercial uses. Several commercial areas are located within or adjacent to the urban village, along 25th NE, NE **Blakeley** and Union Bay Place NE, and along NE 45th St. The major commercial area is University Village Shopping Center, which occupies 24 acres, with the adjacent QFC of approximately 9 acres in the southern half of the urban village. The western portion of the urban village contains its entire residential population. South of the urban village boundaries is the University of Washington. To the north, east and west are single-family residential zones.

The central north-south arteriole, 25th Avenue NE, meets NE 45th Street at the southern urban village boundary and becomes **Montlake** Boulevard NE, part of the state highway system (S.R. 513). **Montlake** Boulevard NE serves as the primary funnel between NE Seattle and travel to the east, west and south.

Linkages and connections are a fundamental concern for this urban village. Its geography means that instead of the easily permeable grid which characterizes most of the University Community Urban Center (and of Seattle), the **Ravenna** Urban Village has restricted access both east-west and north-south. Only two streets run north-south through **Ravenna** Urban Village [25th and 22nd Avenues NE]. Only one of those is an arterial. Only two streets run east-west, and they both have unusual features (NE 45th is a viaduct for six blocks, while NE 54th is precipitously steep traversing the same slope.) The dearth of through streets due to a combination of restrictive topography and large land holdings creates blockages and concentrates traffic and congestion along 25th Avenue NE, NE 45th Street and **Montlake** Boulevard NE. Overflow impacts the **Blakeley-Union** Bay corridor as well.

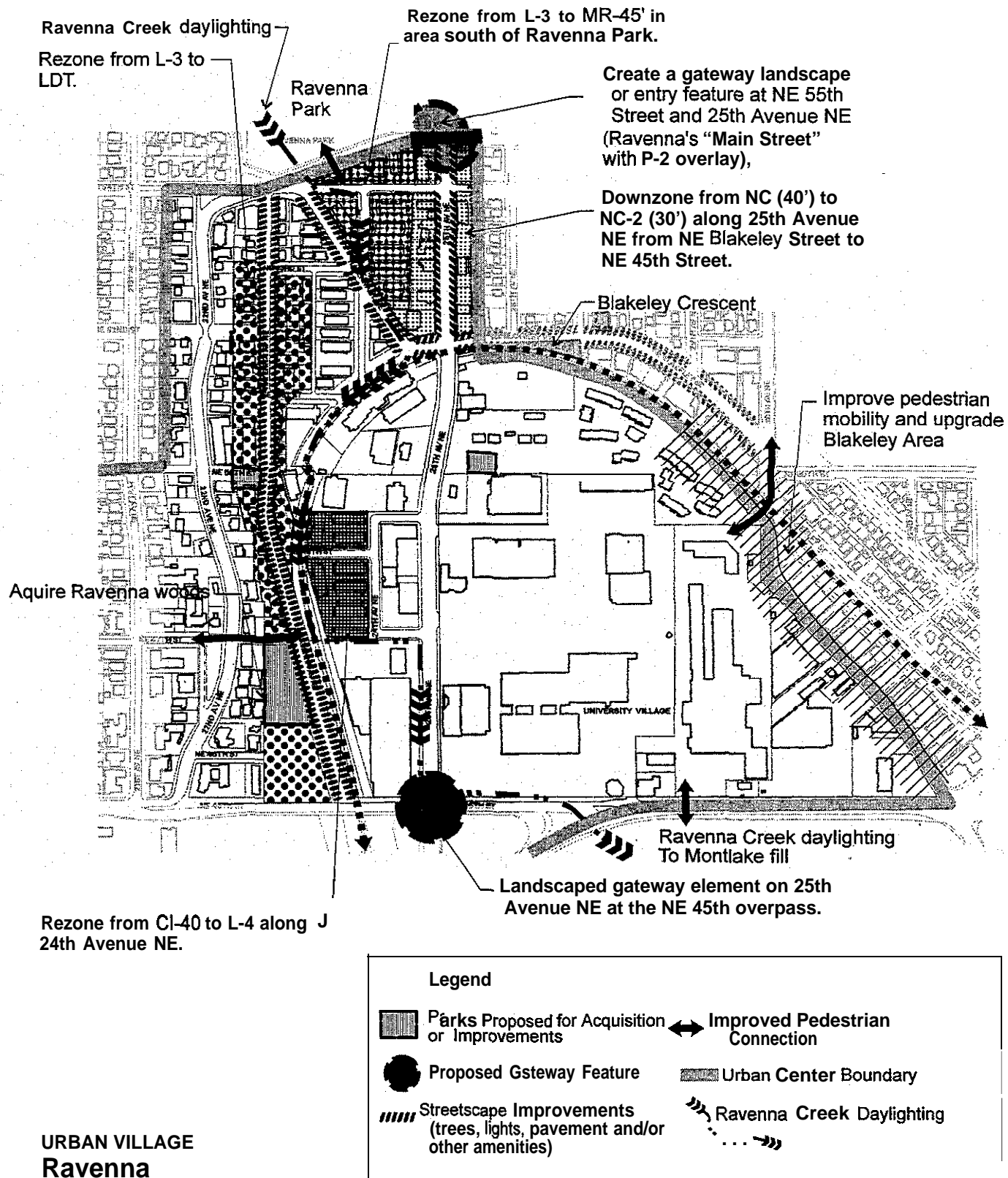


Figure III-23: Ravenna Urban Wage

During the planning process participants used two three-dimensional computer graphics to visualize both the status quo and development potential. In the graphics below, the University of Washington is to the south and west, University Village Shopping Center is in the foreground in the flats on the site of the marsh that was once here, Ravenna Park is up to the north and west, Calvary cemetery on the right is the park-like area visible from the viaduct. The graphic immediately below shows existing structures, the status quo.

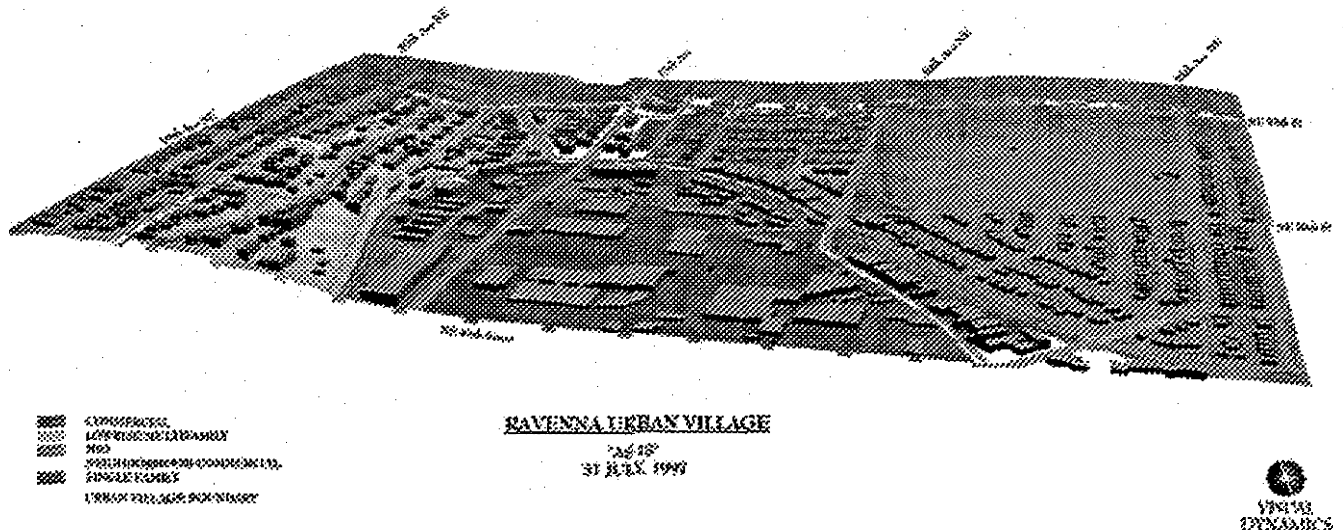


Figure ///-24: Current Building Volume

The second drawing shows how the area could change, according to current zoning. If the allowable heights and lot **coverages** were utilized, the entire University Village/Union Bay Place **area** could be built up to 65 feet, the **Ravenna** Springs hillside could rise everywhere to three stories, and the ground plane would vanish. Both sides of 25th NE could grow to four stories.

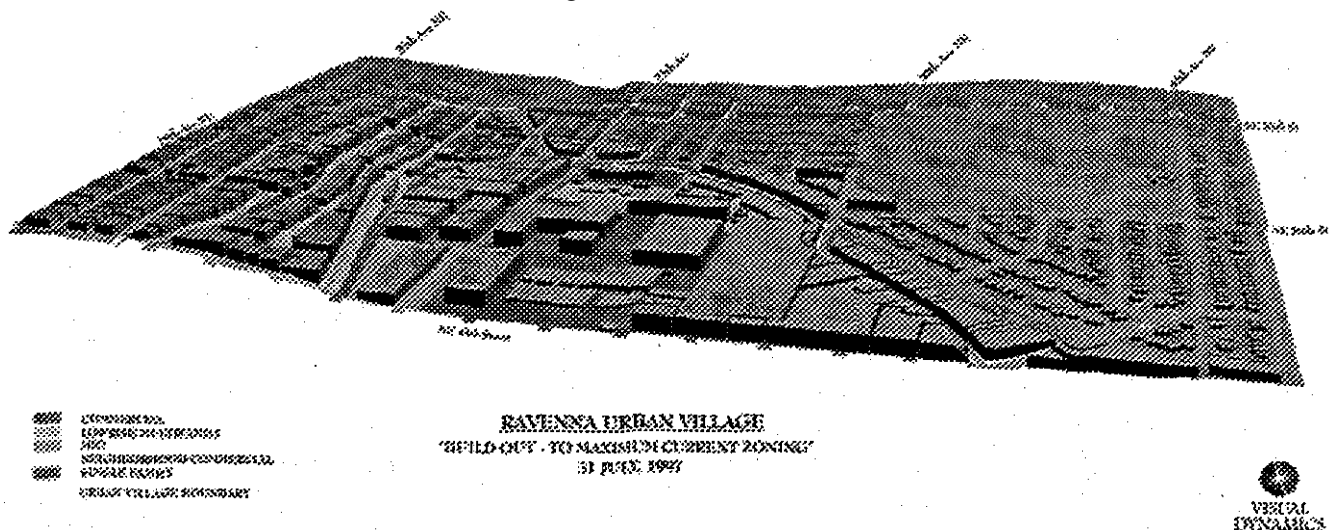


Figure III-25: Building Volume Allowed by Code

The planning process in this urban village focused on: what matters, what defines the neighborhood, how it wants to grow, change or accommodate change-in a phrase, growth management. The growth management which is 'provided by the neighborhood planning process has allowed the neighborhood to examine what it wants to keep and how it wants to control and to accommodate change.

Open space. A high priority for Ravenna Urban Village is retaining existing green space, including the greenbelt on the hillside to the west of the **Burke-Gilman** Trail. Part of this ties is known as Ravenna Woods and the neighborhood wants to **preserve** it through public ownership. The community wants a daylighted **Ravenna** Creek, restoring a small segment of the watershed that historically drained into Union Bay.. City Council Resolution 28867 acknowledges the City's interest in daylighting the creek. The benefits of reconnection are ecologicrd, social and economic. Connections to natural systems and **community-building** are two general elements desired by the neighborhood. P-patches serve both of those needs. Demand is triple the supply right now and more will be needed with additional population density.

Residential. The existing residential area is a combination of single-family houses, condos, 2-story apartment **buildings**, several cottage complexes, some 3-story apartment buildings and the 4-story S **.H.A.** building adj scent to the **Burke-Gilman**. The neighborhood has been involved in Design Review since before it became a citywide effort, **since** the development of a former City Light substation by the Seattle Housing Authority. The resulting **fourplex** townhouses, developed in a way that saved valued trees and preserved open space, fit the character of the neighborhood architecturally. These housing designs promote both individual privacy and community. Sensitivity to existing housing would have preserved other, substantial trees which the neighborhood sought to save, in an attempt to mitigate a comer four-story building that faces one-story single-fad y houses on the three adjacent comers.

Commercial. The recent development of University Village Shopping Center from a neighborhood-oriented shopping district into a regional draw with a combination of **chain** and catalog stores has made it a favorite place to go gift shopping, but has also resulted in the removal of sources of some goods and services considered basic by the neighborhood. The community and the University Village have **agreed** in principle to undertake a master plan to speak to the needs of all parties.

Transportation. Lacking are good pedestrian and transit connections. Sidewalks are needed along **arterials**. Good access is needed to the RTA station expected to be **located** near NE 45th and 15th NE, so several shuttle routes are proposed that would serve a variety of needs. **Traffic** is perceived by tie-thirds of all survey respondents as the biggest problem in **the** area. Congestion and near-collisions are the standard along 25th NE while speed is a problem along the **Blakeley-Union Bay** Place corridor. **Blakeley-Union Bay** Place NE arcs northeast of University Village,

the Silver Could Motel, and peripheral areas, carrying traffic from University Village, vehicles going through the shopping center between 25th Avenue NE and Five Corners at Sand Point Way, and motorists making the fastest connection between Sand Point Way and Lake City and I-5 via ramps at NE 68th or NE 75th Streets. Its surface is a broken macadam without sidewalks or drainage.

Proposed Actions

Fundamental elements/aims:

- **Daylight Ravenna Creek**, creating a (blue) **greenway**. This is the centerpiece of the **Ravenna Urban Village Plan**.
- Decrease presence and **reliance** on single-occupancy vehicle. Increase use and availability of **transit**: Metro and shuttle in the near-term, RTA and additional shuttles in the longer-term. Monorail relationship is **unclear**.
- Celebrate neighborhood entrances with gateways from the north, at 55th, and the south, south side of the 45th Street viaduct.
- Create and enhance a neighborhood Main Street that diversifies safe pedestrian movement and diversifies commercial and residential choices; It would lie on 25th between 55th and **Blakeley**, with potential for extending further **south** along 25th, and use downzoning, **design** guidelines, and a possible PI overlay.
- Ease pedestrian connections throughout. Add sidewalks, curbs, and gutters. Improve or add crosswalks.
- Preserve existing green space, **Ravenna Woods**, and add **Blakeley Crescent** as a neighborhood park.
- Preserve small-scale housing along **Ravenna Avenue** and the integrity and stability of the steep slopes of **Ravenna Springs** by downzoning, while allowing controlled **higher** density in an area better able to **handle** it (**Park Triangle**). Zoning changes can be used to retain these cottages on **Ravenna Avenue**, promote affordable housing and rent stability, and foster a sense of community.
- Study the use of a combination of zoning changes, of upzones and downzones (perhaps regulated by a mechanism **called Transfer** of Development Rights to make sure that the impacts **are** equitable).
- Adopt neighborhood customized **design** guidelines **relating** to trees, **transition**, the **Burke-Gilman Trail**.

Open Space

Proposals relating to open space fall into several categories: new neighborhood parks and natural areas, P-patches (D 19), and transportation-related open space improvements. Acquisition of **Ravenna Woods** (D 180 and its preservation as a natural area and funding and City support of the community-driven **Ravenna Creek Daylighting project (D4)**, which lies entirely within this urban village, are the two highest priority actions in this urban village plan. **Ravenna Woods**, west of **Ravenna**

Avenue NE, is a major hillside remnant forest currently under threat of development. A third element is the development of a patch of Seattle Transportation Department property between 25th and 27th Avenues NE on the south side of NE **Blakeley** Street into a useful public amenity adjacent to the **Burke-Gilman** Trail (D22, B+2/RUV). "**Blakeley** Crescent" is a concept for using the public property on the south side of NE **Blakeley** between the **Burke-Gilman** Trail and the street as a public park, and incorporating the 27th NE street end at the Trail into a neighborhood amenity. Related elements are consideration of a Trail entry and crossing (B 12), of a potential neighborhood community center on the 25th side of current UW housing property (D14) and of better pedestrian access to U Village from the north (B10).

The discovery by the neighborhood of a pond on the western end of the UW housing area, called the Vie-Mix Pond" since it is a manmade remnant of the former nursery, generated a concept of a central neighborhood park with basketball, picnic, potential community and senior center, possible active recreation (D 14). The site is UW property and no negotiations have begun yet. Additional significant open space elements were preservation of the right of way along 50th Street as a green space between 21st and **Ravenna** Avenue (D2 I), the improvement of NW Heritage Park (D20), located in the street right of way on the north side of NE **Blakeley** at 24th NE; and acquisition of Silver Cloud Woods, the eastern 60' of Silver Cloud parcel adjacent to the **Burke-Gilman** Trail. This substantial woodlot, the last in the flats, was intended by the community to link to **Blakeley** Crescent, above, but has been logged since the **Ravenna** Urban Village planning priorities were determined last fall and is a four-story addition now. [Note that there has been a further loss of views of **Rainier** from the **Burke-Gilman** Trail as a result.]

With regard to P-patches, the community wants to retain the existing P-patch within the NE 52nd Street ROW on the west side of **Ravenna** Avenue and obtain additional opportunity sites in strategic locations (D 1 9). The concept of allowing planting strips to be used for P-patches by their owners was supported but needs regulation to allow space for people to access parked cars.

Two streets are very strongly supported "for status as Green Streets: **Ravenna** Avenue NE south of NE 54th (D+1/RUV) and the whole of **Ravenna** Place NE, namely 2 blocks between NE 55th and NE **Blakeley** (D+2/RUV). On **Ravenna** Avenue, the intent is to enhance street trees and keep it as a pedestrian and local access road. In addition, the aim is to retain the existing lane south from NE 48th Street ROW to NE 45th (i.e., beneath the viaduct). If **Ravenna** Woods property, above, becomes a park, the southern portion of street would remain restricted to local access only. The aims for **Ravenna** Place NE Green Street include enhancing street trees and pedestrian usage and inclusion of a daylighted **Ravenna** Creek if **Ravenna** Place is part of the final route choice. A third element, desired but not ranked as highly by the community, is a study to evaluate the possibility of a boulevard/realignment plan to improve the link between **Ravenna** and **Montlake** Boulevards along **Ravenna** Place NE and 25th Ave NE (no activity listed).

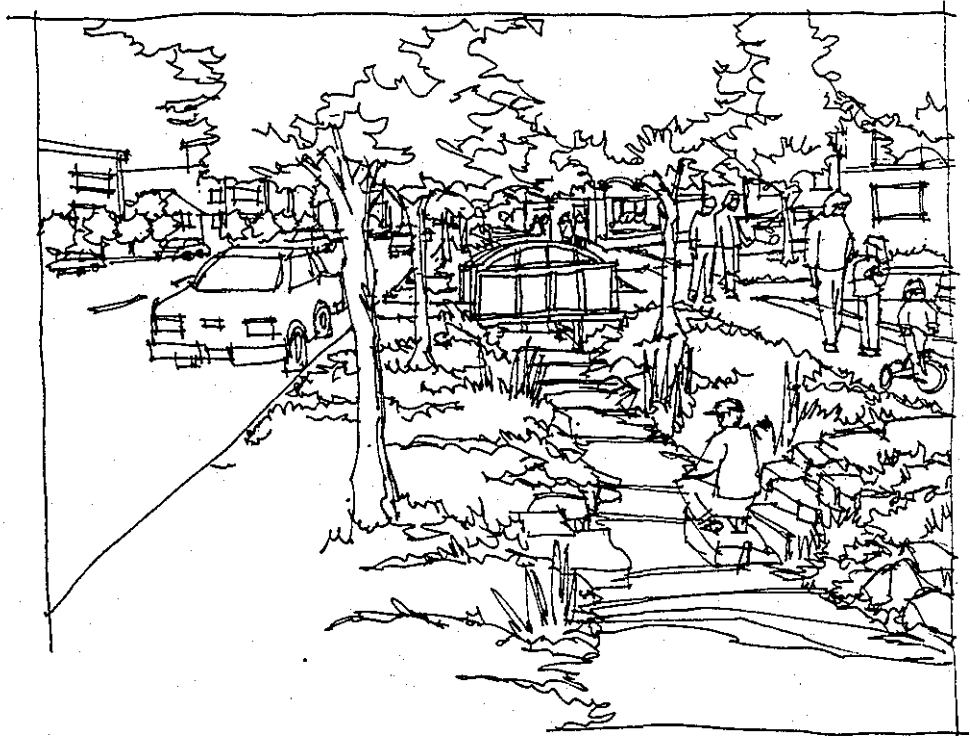


Figure III-26: Daylighting of Ravenna Creek /s an Important Priority that Would Upgrade the Neighborhood.



Figure III-27: Ravenna Woods Lies Just to the West of the Burke Gilman Trail

Transportation

Among the vital connections that need improvement are a number that relate to pedestrian mobility. The most important for the urban village is along the Blakeley-Union Bay Place corridor. Sidewalks and crosswalks related to key destinations to the south are proposed to improve pedestrian safety. Drainage would be improved as a byproduct. Design of these sidewalk and drainage improvements along Blakeley needs to be developed immediately, to prevent the current piecemeal redevelopment along the corridor from producing discontinuous results. Traffic calming along this corridor is a universal priority; Fundamental are sidewalks on the north side of Blakeley between 25th and 30th, while sidewalks on the south side of Blakeley are linked to the development of Blakeley Crescent park above. The neighborhood plan calls for a pedestrian safety study and parking management plan along Union Bay Place. Sidewalks along the west side of 30th Ave NE, rather than immediately adjacent to Calvary Cemetery on the east side of the street, are also part of the plan.

Access across 54th to Ravenna Park can be improved by curb bulbs on 54th and a study is recommended to consider realignment of the intersection at Ravenna Place NE to reduce the hard surface area and contain both vehicular and pedestrian traffic within well-defined areas. Further improvement of both pedestrian and bicycle safety along the section of 30th NE that stretches between Blakeley and Union Bay Place and includes a Burke-Gilman crossing requires study. Possibilities to consider include realignment of 30th into Blakeley, curb bulbs, crossing signage. This is a road sharing/visibility issue. An improved pedestrian crossing of 55th at 30th is part of the plan, to improve access from transit stops and Bryant/Assumption Schools. A review is suggested for the possible use of caution light/crossing flags (as in Kirkland) at this location.

A variety of shuttle routes and purposes were examined by the neighborhood. The highest ranking is for a one-way RTA collector ("RTA Circuit") that would link the neighborhood to the proposed RTA station at NE 45th and 15th Avenue NE. The suggested route is down the 45th Street viaduct, north on Union Bay Place along Blakeley, up 25th and west on 55th to 22nd, up the hillside on the 22nd diagonal and to the station. A second, slightly less highly ranked route which would not replace the above ("RTA Express"), is also proposed as a connection to the RTA but its route would be restricted to an east-west route along NE 45th Street, perhaps extending as far east and west as Magnuson Park and Wallingford. A third shuttle route ("Take Me Home") is intended to allow those who are able to walk downhill to the University Village Shopping Center to catch a ride home, especially with groceries. This one would have a fixed pickup point in the south U Village/Safeway area but a route that varied with the particular passengers. The outer perimeter of this shuttle's route would be specified.

In an attempt to resolve some of the congestion and perceived danger along the section of 25th Avenue NE between NE 45th and NE 55th, several realignments

end/or driveway consolidations were considered. None of them received the highest **approval** ranking from the community, which is probably an indication that these **ideas** are inadequate for the problem. The problem is a combination of congestion in the corridor and conflicting left turns from the center **lane**.

Development of a Residential **Parking** Zone permit system for football game days at Husky Stadium is a high priority. Both the University of Washington and Seahawks (for the time period they play at the facility) would be **financially** responsible. Vehicles parked without a sticker would be towed. A more standard weekday RPZ may require further consideration later but is not a high priority now. Additional parking restrictions were considered along NE **Blakeley**, which on occasion becomes the equivalent of a used car sale lot as well as a dumping **ground**. Removing parking from the **south** side of **Blakeley** between 25th and 27th was ranked highly by the community, with an option for 4-hour **Burke Gilman** related parking also considered. In either case, the public area of **Blakeley** Crescent, described above, would be increased. Restricted parking is desired **along Blakeley** between 30th and 35th, but is not as high a **priority**.

Additional solutions to the neighborhood **parking** problem include several high priority elements: the development of a Traffic Management Plan(s) involving both University Village and the University of **Washington**; encouragement of local businesses to reduce employee vehicle trips and to provide employee **parking off-**neighborhood streets. Also discussed was a four-story parking structure.

Additional pedestrian and **bicycle** connections proposed include:

- . Improve access to University Village
- . Extend the **Hillclimb** stairs on NE 47th St. (W of 22nd Ave NE), complete the pedestrian connection from NE **Blakeley** at 29th NE to the **Burke-Gilman** Trail, develop pedestrian and bike access between 45th Place NE and **Burke-Gilman** (a route up and down from trestle), provide an overlook and trail with a Chinese stair system S of **Burke-Gilman** south of 27th Ave ROW development with **Burke-Gilman** access as part of **Blakeley** Crescent, 4-hour parking and **trailhead**, improve the 27th **Ave** NE Bikeway to allow safe access for north-south biking from the North End to the **Burke-Gilman** Trail.

Housing/Land Use

Proposals, of the highest priority

- Protect existing cottage housing in the **Ravenna Urban Village** with LDT/C zoning **change**.
- Protect status as Green Street, with single-family and cottage housing and **Environmentally-Critical-Area** steep slopes by rezoning both sides of **Ravenna** Ave S of 54th as LDT/C.
- **Change** zoning from NC2-40 to **NC2-30** **along** 25th Avenue NE between 55th and **Blakeley**, limiting the maximum building height thereto 30 feet, as a primary element of making 25th a pedestrian-friendly Neighborhood Main Street.

Ranked desirable but of lower priority because it is dependent upon other rezoning actions:

- Upzone the three-block **Ravenna Place** NE north triangle, increasing the height limit to allow for condos (and street-level cafes) across from **Ravenna Park** and along the NE side of **Ravenna Place**. The upzoning, downzoning, creation of a TDR bank and preservation of **Ravenna Woods** are intimately tied together. The web that links them into a workable package has not been developed yet and is a major element **needing further planning**. **Creation** of a Transfer of Development Rights (TDR) Bank within the Urban Village is proposed to allow compensation for changes in allowed density.

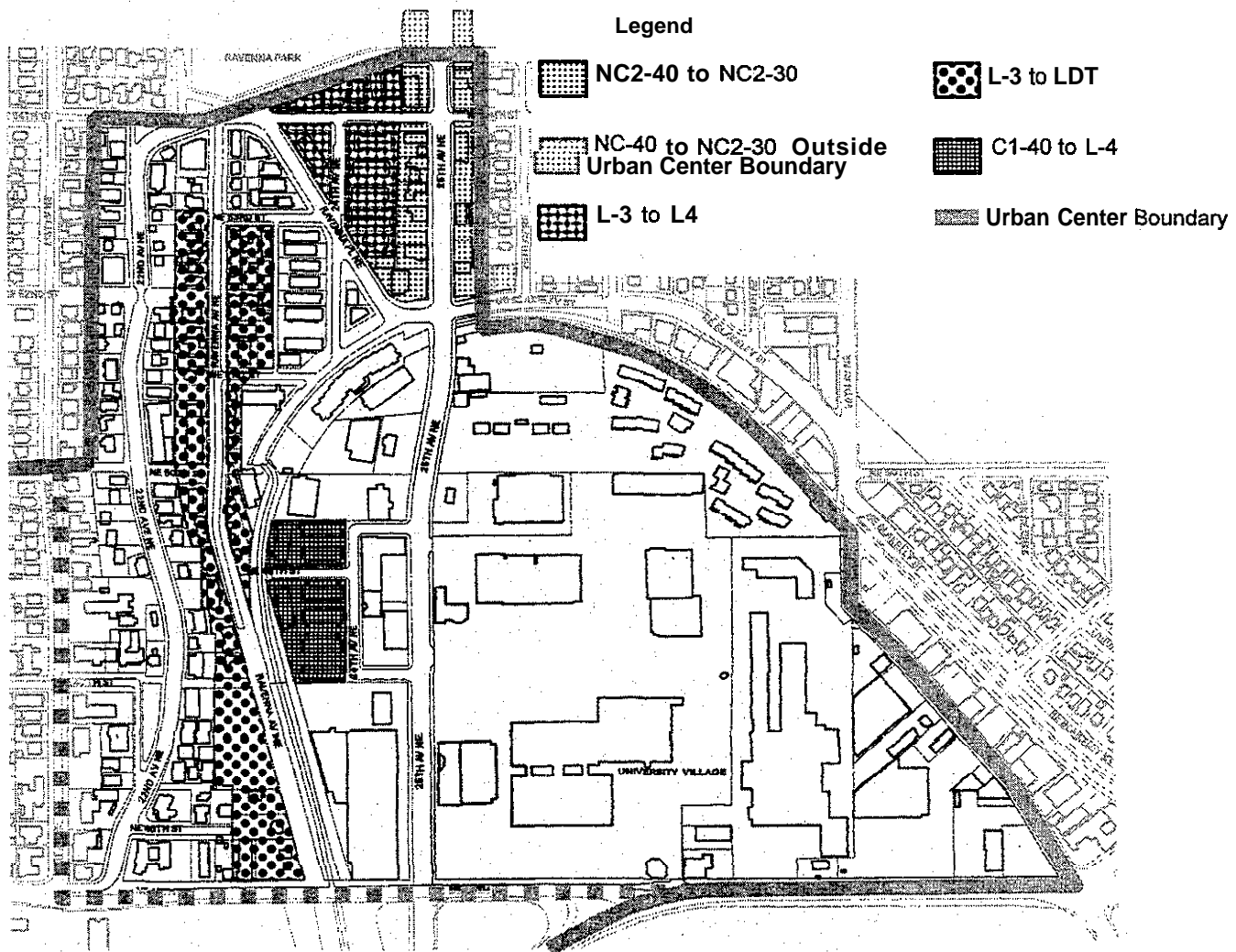


Figure III-28: Proposed Zoning Changes in Ravenna Urban Village

A high priority for **Ravenna Urban Village** is to encourage diversity and foster responsible neighbors committed to improving the community at large. In pursuit of a community where people cars live, shop, play, and walk to work, the community has proposed an **urban** redevelopment of the Park Triangle block bonnded by **Ravenna** Place NE, NE 55th Street, and mid-block between 24th NE and 25th NE. Among the options for mixed housing are co-ops, condos, co-housing associations, and the application of an urban Habitat for Humanity, as well as other forms of low-income and affordable housing. It is vital to a diverse community that the people who live in the **Ravenna** Urban Village be able to afford redeveloped housing. There is strong support for the incorporation of housing units within the University Village expansion. There is support for the exploration of loft residential housing in the upper stories of the C 1-40 and C2-40 zones *along* **Blakeley** and Union Bay Place. City-wide balanced siting of social services is supported. In addition, the neighborhood recommends a study of rent control and other rent stabilization mechanisms.

Several items receive high priority relating to design review and design guidelines. Customized design guidelines are required for all tmnsitions between abutting residential or residential-commercial zones. Careful and complete application of existing design guidelines as well as of neighborhood-customized design guidelines is required for all development proj ects. In particular, L3 Housing is encouraged to develop visible courtyards to increase the perceived open space in this zone. A high priority is that notification procedures for design review and Master Use Permit (MUP) processes become more relevant by adopting a 2000' notification radius and changing the composition of the Design Review Board to reflect the community better.

Of high priority is the creation of a P2 overlay for 25th Avenue NE north of **Blakeley** to create a "Neighborhood Main Street", which is linked to multiple items: downzoning 25th from 4 to 3 stories, upzoning with increased density to the west, preservation of existing **single-family** housing in the **area**, strengthening neighborhood character and **pedestrian** mobility, promoting interesting **architecture** and public art. Redevelopment of the 25th Avenue main street is anticipated to include mixed-use buildings with residential above street-level retail.

Also a high priority is protection of the **Burke-Gilman** Trail in the stretch that goes through this urban village, and a design guideline has been developed to provide some protective restrictions on development. **In addition**, rezoning of three parcels immediately adjacent to the **Burke-Gilman** Trail is proposed, from a current zoning of C1 -40 to L-4 with purely residentird usage.

Additional design guidelines relate to tree preservation and protection of the **Burke-Gilman** from adjacent development.

Intended Results

- . Neighborhood shopping district, with residential above
- . Strengthening of community
- . Increased ground-related housing, owned by residents
- . Improved pedestrian, bicycle circulation
- More open space
- . Less **traffic** congestion/conflict

People **are** what neighborhoods come down *to*. The elements above are to sustain a neighborhood that includes and encourages **human** interaction, all ages, a relationship to the earth.

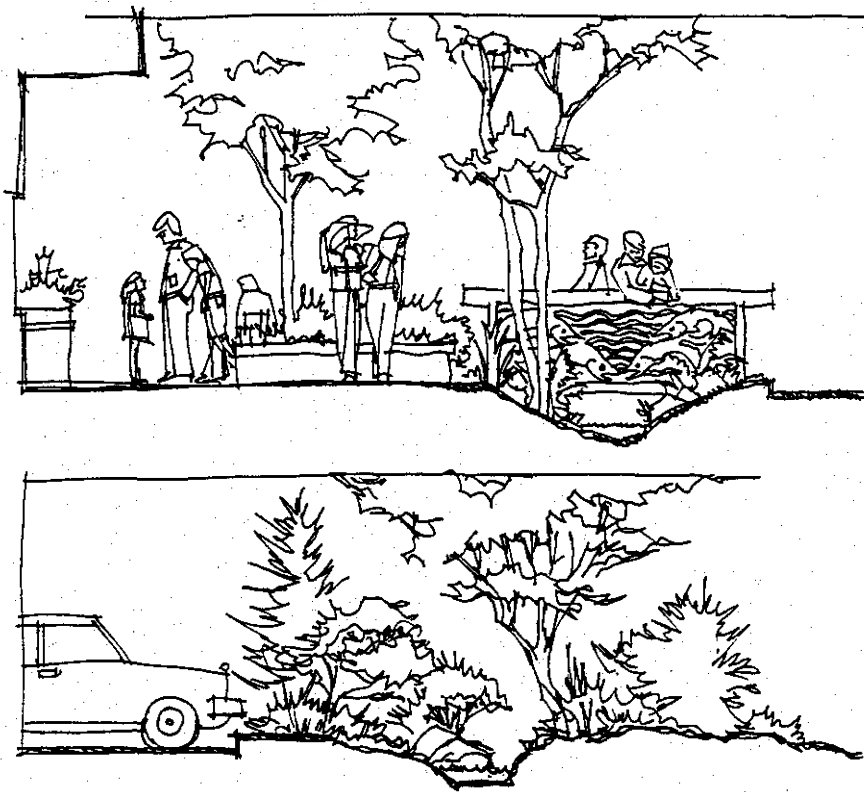


Figure III-29: *The Daylighting of Ravenna Creek Could Take a Variety of Configurations, Depending on Its Location and Relationship to Surroundings.*